

News Behind the Zhukov Purge

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MARSHAL ZHUKOV (right) cheerfully braved a floral barrage on a recent visit to Yugoslavia's Tito. Since his ouster from the Red command, Zhukov will have more time for mourning—minus flowers.

WASHINGTON

MERRY-GO-ROUND

By DREW PEARSON

WASHINGTON, Nov. 3.—State Department officials who know the inside of how their chief, John Foster Dulles, persuaded President Eisenhower not to invite Marshal Zhukov to Washington last Summer, figure that history inside the Kremlin might be entirely different today if Dulles' persuasion had not prevailed.

A trip by Zhukov to Washington would have so enhanced his prestige with the Russian people that he could not have been demoted.

What happened was that last Summer the President definitely wanted to invite his old wartime comrade-in-arms to Washington for a talk on improving Russian-American relations. This was reported by this column on Aug. 25, 1956 and later confirmed by the President at a press conference.

But Dulles intervened.

AT THAT TIME both Chancellor Adenauer of Germany and the British were worried about any moves which looked like too much friendship between the U.S.A. and USSR, and any side-deals on disarmament. Harold Stassen in London had been talking disarmament with the Russians privately, and the British and Germans protested meeting at Dulles. So the Secretary of State, fearing the President would get too chummy with Marshal Zhukov if he came to Washington, made his successful move.

ALLEN DULLES, younger brother of the Secretary of State and head of Central Intelligence, has been more right than wrong in ferreting out backstage events in Europe.

But he was caught completely off base in the showdown between Marshal Zhukov and party chief Nikita Khrushchev. About two days before Zhukov was relieved, Allen had sent a report to the White House expressing the view that Zhukov was coming up fast and might head a military dictatorship in six months. He had grabbed the secret police, Allen Dulles said, and seemed sure to take over Khrushchev's job.

Last month, furthermore, the CIA chief, speaking in San Francisco, made an unusual public statement that Russia was disrupted by political cross-currents and that Khrushchev seemed headed for trouble. On one basic point, of course, Allen Dulles was right. Khrushchev was grabbing for power. But what Dulles underestimated was Khrushchev's ability to cope with this. He also overestimated the political power of the Red Army.

AS FAR AS CAN BE pieced together, here are the inside facts which caused Khrushchev to move in on the man who had helped him save his job when he faced rebellion from Molotov, Malenkov et al last spring.

Shortly before Zhukov left for Yugoslavia he held a secret meeting aboard the Russian cruiser Kuibyshev at Sevastopol. The great Soviet submarine base in the Black Sea. Present was the top military commander of the Red Army.

They told them first he was opposed to any military adventures in the near East which would risk bringing Russia into conflict with the United States. He was not against political moves in the Near East, but he was against any risk of war. He further told Soviet commanders that Russia should consolidate its position at home, not strike out in the Near East.

ZHUKOV ALSO WANTED TO



tighten Russian control over the satellites. As a military man, he viewed Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Bulgaria as buffer states which would absorb the first brunt of attack in case of war. He did not agree with Khrushchev's more lenient policy toward Poland and the satellites, and it will be recalled that it was Zhukov who cracked down on Hungary last year with the full force of the Red Army.

It is already known that Zhukov had bucked the Soviet Commissars attached to the Red Army for the purpose of keeping the military from dominating the Communist party. He wanted to decrease their power.

All this apparently was too much for Khrushchev, and when the secret meeting at Sevastopol came to his attention, the head of the Communist party moved, while Zhukov was in Belgrade, to plan to promote him upstairs to an innocuous but face-saving post. Zhukov refused. Hence the showdown inside the Kremlin.

Note—Marshal Zhukov is given credit for devoted